1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

to his own matriarchal stock, and at his death his bones are deposited in the cromlech of his mother's kin. In Jowai he neither lives nor eats in his wife's house, but visits it only after dark (p. 76). In the veneration of ancestors, which is the foundation of the tribal piety, the primal ancestress (*Ka Iáwbei*) and her brother are the only persons regarded. The flat memorial stones set up to perpetuate the memory of the dead are called after the woman who represents the clan (*máw kyathei*, p. 150), and the standing stones ranged behind them are dedicated to the male kinsmen on the mother's side.

In harmony with this scheme of ancestor worship, the other spirits to whom propitiation is offered are mainly female, though here male personages also figure (pp. 106—109). The powers of sickness and death are all female, and these are those most frequently worshipped (p. 107). The two protectors of the household are goddesses (p. 112), though with them is also revered the first father of the clan, *U Thâwlang*.

Priestesses assist at all sacrifices, and the male officiants are only their deputies (p. 121); in one important state, Khyrim, the High Priestess and actual head of the State is a woman, who combines in her person sacerdotal and regal functions (p. 70).

The Khasi language, so far as known, is the only member of the Mŭn-Khmĕr family which possesses a grammatical gender, distinguishing all nouns as masculine and feminine; and here also the feminine nouns immensely preponderate (p. 206). The pronouns of the second (*nĕ̆, phĕ̆*) and third person (*ă, kă*) have separate forms for the sexes in the singular, but in the plural only one is used (*phĭ, kĭ*), and this is the plural form of the feminine singular.

It may perhaps be ascribed to the pre-eminence

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

MARRIAGE.

591 It is proposed in this section to consider marriage from its social side, the religious aspect thereof being reserved for another paragraph. The most remarkable feature of the Khasi marriage is that it is usual for the husband to live with his wife in his mother-in-law's house, and not for him to take his bride home, as is the case in other communities. This arrangement amongst the Khasis is no doubt due to the prevalence of the matriarchate. As long as the wife lives in her mother's house, all her earnings go to her mother, who expends them on the maintenance of the family. Amongst the Khasis, after one or two children are born, and if a married couple get on well together, the husband frequently removes his wife and family to a house of his own, and from the time the wife leaves her mother's house she and her husband pool their earnings, which are expended for the support of the family. Amongst 591 the Syntengs, however, and the people of Maoshai, the case 576 is different, for with them the husband does not go and live in his mother-in-law's house, he only visits her there. In Jowai some people admitted to me that the husband came to his mother-in-law's house only after dark, and that he did not eat, smoke, or even partake of betel-nut there, the idea being that because none of his earnings go to support this house, therefore it is not etiquette for him to partake of food or other refreshment there. If a Synteng house is visited, it is unusual to find the husbands of any of the married daughters there, although the sons of the family may be seen in the house when they have returned from work. Generally in the day-time you will find in a Synteng dwelling an old crone, who is the grandmother, or even the great-grandmother, of the family, also grandchildren or great-grandchildren; but the husbands of the 796 married daughters are not there. The Syntengs seem to have 611 more closely preserved the customs of the matriarchate than the Khasis, and the Syntengs claim that their *niam* or religious ceremonies are purer, i.e. that they more closely correspond to what they were in ancient times than those of the 589 Khasis. Amongst the Syntengs, occasionally, a widow is 765 allowed to keep her husband's bones after his death, on con-

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR? Khasi AR?

585 768 that they may prosper, that they may obtain rice and fish, that they may possess hundreds and thousands; thou, oh god." The priest then pours liquor on the ground three times from the gourd, counting "one, two, three." He then continues the invocation thus, "*Hei*, thou, oh mother; oh grandmother; oh maternal uncle; oh father; oh *Siáid-sáu*; oh younger grandmother; oh elder grandmother; oh younger grandfather; oh elder grandfather. As the flesh has fallen (on the floor, i.e. the feast has been prepared), the ring has been put on, the three strips of flesh are ready (alluding to the three dried fish already mentioned), you will all of you (ancestors) give out, you will continue giving strength and spirit (i.e. to the married pair) that they may be well" (and so on, as written in the first invocation). He then pours out the liquor three times as before. He then adjures the Siám, the elders, and all the people who do not belong to either of the two clans, and pours out liquor three times as before. The three pieces of dried fish are first placed on the *tympan*, the high rack above the fire-place, then removed and tied to the ridge-pole of the house, amidst shouts of *Ho, hoi, hoi, hoi*. The priest then sacrifices a fowl, and the rich soup without blemish (also flow), to o *Siáid* sáu and *Iaw-bei* (the spirits of deceased ancestors of the family), and present them with *dphlait*, or pieces of flesh. Two or three days afterwards, the bride, accompanied by her female relatives, pays a visit to the bridegroom at his house, and after this they go and come as they like to one another's houses.

585 769

591 782 After two or three children have been born, they take down the pieces of dried fish from the roof and sacrifice two pigs, one on behalf of the husband and another on behalf of the wife. Then they say there can be no possible sin, and husband and wife use each other's things and pool their earnings, and if the husband has a house of his own, the wife can go and live with him; this, however, is not the custom amongst many of the Syntengs, who more strictly observe the principles of the matriarchate. The cost of the marriage ceremonies amongst

585 435 Khasis, Syntengs and Wars, may be put down at between Rs. 50 and Rs. 200 according to the position of the parties.

[p.19]

CHAPTER II

Descent, among Khasis, is counted through the mother; residence is also matrilocal. A woman lives with her mother from her birth until some time after her marriage. After one or two children have been born her husband may build for his family a house on the village land, in the village of the wife; this house becomes her property. The ancestral house goes to the youngest daughter. In the absence of a daughter the next youngest sister's youngest daughter becomes the heiress. Rarely, a man will take his wife to his mother's village. This case will be considered later.

A man is born, in the house of the mother's mother, or if the parents have built a separate house, in the house of his mother. He continues to live there until his marriage, when he generally goes to live in the wife's mother's house, whether it is in the same village or a different village.

The present U Suba Dei married in the village of Mawphlang, where his mother also lived, and built the house, which is known as his house. It is, technically, the property of his wife Ka Shyngoh and will be inherited by Ka Dhonkon, and thereafter, by Ka Riatiam. The house of U Suba Dei's mother, Ka Jin has been inherited by Ka Kmihon, and will go to the next generation to Ka Pem. If the latter has no daughters, the property will go to Ka Deit and failing her heiress, to Ka Phra and then to Ka Lamih. If she has no issue, it will pass to her sister Ka Lamih and so on to Ka Lajor. If Ka Lajor has no daughters, the property will go to Ka Jem's family to her youngest daughter Ka Aiben. As she has only sons, the next heiress will be Ka Symon, and if she predeceases Ka Aiben or has no daughters, the girl Ka Kmihon will inherit next. If

his house or paddy field or grove: but the sale does not extend to anything more than his right of occupancy.....Any site, garden or piece of cultivation if abandoned, can be taken by another."

A son of a house of the village, of which the Kur is of the earliest settlers or has been given similar privileges, has the right of building a house, and of cultivating land in the Ri Raid. Reference has been made to the rule practice whereby a man brings his wife from her mother's house to his own village. In such a case he may set up a separate house on the community land, and cultivate some of it, to maintain his wife and children. The property will pass, on his death, to his daughters as usual. It will not go to his mother or sister.

(a) The man U Harilok married twice, but did not settle down with his wife on either occasion. He built a house in Mawphlang which is his mother's ancestral village and brought each wife there. Both of them were divorced in turn and have left. If any of his wives had lived with him the house would have gone to his daughters. Now, however, the heiress is Ka Jem, the daughter of a sister. [Genealogy XIII].

(b) The woman Ka Lakimon is of the old Lyngkhi clan of Mawphlang. When U Lyman married her, he set up a house in Mawphlang and cultivated land. But on his death, the woman went away to Shillong with her children, about 10-15 years ago, selling the house and abandoning the jhum land. The son U Bollestar has recently come to Mawphlang and is working on U Suto Rai's house. If he settles down, *i.e.*, marries and wants to set up a house, he can do so on the Ri Raid. (Genealogy IV).

(c) The foundress of the Khar Dumpep clan was a woman of the village Dumpep, and of clan Khar Dohling. She had two other sisters. One of the three sisters went to Mylliem, and another came to Mawphlang while the third remained at Dumpep as Ka Khadduh. The girl who went to Mylliem founded the Khar Sohnoh Kur and the girl who came to Mawphlang founded

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[p.208]

SOCIAL GROUPINGS AMONG THE KHASIS OF ASSAM

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Introduction

THE Khasis, who inhabit the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of Assam, are matrilineal. Like the Garos, they, are matrilocal in residence. Exclusive ownership over family property is claimed by the Khasi women and the youngest daughter (*Ka Khadduh*) who lives permanently in the house of her mother, is the custodian of the family property and the holder of religion (*Ka bat ka-niam*)[1].

This paper deals with the social groupings, namely, the clan, sub-clan and family, of the Khasis. The materials were collected in 1954 from Mawphlang, Cherapunji and Mawlaih and Mawsmai villages further south of the Chera State.

Discussion

In the language of the Khasi, the prefix *Ka* is usually used before the name of a woman or any object belonging to a woman (or considered feminine). The use of *Ka* as a prefix before the name of each social group is suggested to have bearing on Khasi matriliny. *Kur* is not a very expressive and exact term for a clan. *Kabor*, which is supposed to have sprung from the women (*long jaid na ka kynthei*)[2] is more exact. Similarly, *Ka-Ki'puh* and *Ka-iing* denote the sub-clan and family respectively.

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[1] Gurdon, P. R. T., *The Khasis*, London, 1914 p. 86.

[2] Op. cit., page 86.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

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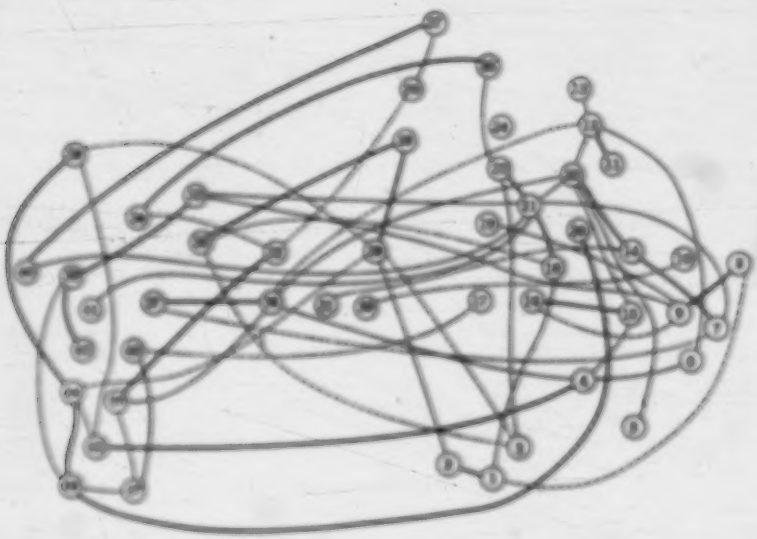

FIG. 10. — *Kinship and Household Location in Sohkynduh.*
——— Matrilineal kinships relations among household-owners;
——— Affinal relations (direct) among household-members;
- - - - - Affinal relations (indirect) among household-members.

particular two families are not restricted to one, but may be accumulated two or three, though I omitted to indicate these in Fig. 10.

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There are some extensions of marriage relations with members outside the village. In Sohkynduh, out of 88 (48 housewners and 40 their husbands) 13 men and 2 women came from neighbouring villages. Owing to the predominant uxorilocal arrangement, those who came in from outside the village were mostly men. By these members, five different *kur*, new to Sohkynduh, were found, as shown in List 7 (17-21). Most of these outsiders came from villages inside the Kadashinong, or villages no further than a day's journey there and back. This area might be called a secondary endogamous area, and includes more than half a dozen villages. In Kongton, 20 husbands and 3 women came from neighbouring villages by their marriages. The secondary endogamous areas of Kongton and of Sohkynduh are not the same but they overlap in certain places, the surrounding areas being centred on each village. There were, by December 1955, no instances of direct marriage between these two villages.

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There are a few exceptions to local endogamy, such as those individuals who have become Christians and are educated in towns like Shillong or Cherrapunjee. They usually move to a town, seeking

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

592 The Khasi domestic unit (co-residential group) can be divided into four categories:

1. Households consisting of wife, husband and their children, wife's unmarried sisters and brothers—sometimes including widowed or divorced.
2. Households including all members of an *iing* (excluding their spouses from members of 1). In this type, larger households contain all the descendants of three or more generations from one woman (in this case, an *iing* corresponds to a *kpuh*).
3. Households of intermediate type between 1 and 2. Husbands are supposed to live in their wife's house, but they often go back to their sister's house for meals, and sometimes sleep there. They are supposed to work in their wife's field but they might work in their mother's (sister's) field, if necessary. This tendency is especially strong among newly married couples before they have a child.
4. Households consisting of only one elementary family. This mostly happens when a man married a non-heiress.

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Most Khasi households are of types 1, 3 and 4 and these three types are usually found within one village. They were found in the four villages in which I worked. It is to these dwelling units that I have given the name of house in Lists 6 and 9. Category 2, according to the information of Khasis and Jaintias, was used to be found among the Jaintias, though nowadays such cases are rapidly decreasing, changing into forms 1, 3 and 4. The members of category 2 belong to an *iing*, which structurally corresponds to the *tarwad* of the Nayar, and the *parui* of the Minangkabau.

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178 184 591 Category 2 may have been practised among certain of the Khasi a long time ago. Kongton people said that as recently as their father's generation, there were many husbands who stayed at the mother's house after their marriage and visited the wife at night. Nowadays, visiting husbands are very unusual cases in the Khasi Hills, though such situations may occur among newly married couples before they have children. Gurdon, who wrote his book *The Khasis* in 1914, states:

> "Amongst the Khasis, after one or two children are born, and if a married couple get on well together, the husband frequently removes his wife and family to a house she and her husband post their savings, which are expended for the support of the family" (p. 76).

In the Khasi Hills, the transition period between duolocal residence and neolocal or uxorilocal residence seems to have been shortened during the last forty or fifty years. This might have been effected through the influence of Christian marriages, which start cohabitation of the wife and the husband immediately after the marriage ceremony. However, in Jutings whose inhabitants originated in the Jaintia Hills where duolocal marriage is the usual practice, there are even now many instances of a man staying at his mother's house for several

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

years after his marriage. During this period he works in his wife's field, then, if the couple gets on well, they start to live together in an independent house (non-heiress's case) or in the wife's house (heiress's case). In spite of the fact that the inhabitants are all Christians, they have retained this custom.

It is difficult to determine at what date the Khasi people have changed from duolocal marriage to uxorilocal marriage. However, the present dwelling unit, with its fluid relationship between husband and wife (in fact, there are many cases of category 3), suggests a situation linked with the duolocal residence pattern. The fragmentary historical information available and the present Khasi residence pattern suggest that the duolocal arrangement may be an older pattern of marriage. When I was in Kongton there was no husband who stayed at his mother's house permanently, visiting his wife at night. The head man told me that, when he married, there were many who did not stay in the wife's house. He was the first person to settle in the wife's house. In his case, he said, he felt sympathy for his wife who had no brother who could work for her. After he had settled in his wife's house, many villagers began to follow his example.[1] When the pattern of a visiting marriage was in vogue, a village must have constituted a more compact endogamous unit. If the husband's house was in another village, a visiting marriage must have been a great inconvenience. The tendency to settle in the wife's house and work for the wife's house must have brought about a wider range of marriage contracts, such as with members of nearby villages, even though in the present form of marriage, village endogamy is much preferred as it is decidedly advantageous particularly for a husband, since he can continue his life in the same familiar environment in spite of uxorilocal marriage.

The variations in the pattern of co-residential grouping, which I have classified into four categories, reflect two different themes in the social structure of the Khasi. On the one hand they represent different stages in the maturity of the individual families concerned. For example, a householder who starts in category 3 or 4 may end as an old man in category 1. On the other hand these variations also reflect the polar opposition between the obligations of matrilineal kinship and the obligations of parenthood; a man, in particular, has conflicting obligations towards the *iing* of his sister and the *iing* of

1. However, all the information which I collected in the upland Khasi hills indicates that the uxorilocal residence pattern has been practised for a long time. According to stories often told by the Kongton people, they migrated from the Jaintia Hills. If these accounts are to be taken as a reflection of the real history of their migrations, it would seem that the Kongton people may have kept up the Jaintia custom including the duolocal residence pattern up to recent times, while the majority of the Khasi practised uxorilocal marriage.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

592 593 613 his wife. Paternal rights are not well recognized among the Khasi. The religious elements in the *iing* institution lay stress only on matrilineal solidarity. These elements tend therefore to orient each individual of the domestic unit to his or her own matrilineal kin group, the *iing*. This results in unstable relations between members of each elementary family, in other words, the marriage relation is one of the weakest.

000 This is the crucial point in matrilineal societies, and has been much discussed by anthropologists. Richards says,

> "In this balance of privileges and duties between the patrikin and the matrikin the crucial point is obviously the husband's right to determine the residence of the bride. If she and her children live in the same homestead or village as his kinsmen, his domestic authority is likely to be greater than where they remain with the wife's relative" (Richards, 1950, p. 208).

• 591 This statement is quite acceptable for those matrilineal systems which provide possibility for a man to take his wife from her matrikin to his house or village where the husband's kin are found, as in cases of the matrilineal Central Bantus, the Ashanti, the Trobriands and the Nayar in North Malabar. However, among the Khasi, there is no such custom of removing a wife from her kin to that of her husband. Since most marriages take place inside a village, there are only two different residential arrangements: one is to take the husband to the wife's house, where he lives with his wife's parents and other matrikin; the second is for the newly married couple to establish an independent house. Among Khasi men and women the usual practice is to leave the parents' house at marriage, except in the case of the heiress (the youngest daughter). In this respect the Khasi differ again from the Nayar and the Minangkabau who form a sibling family on the basis of duolocal residence,[1] and from the Hopi, the Zuni and the Trukese who form a residential group of an extended family, based on matrilineal descent including in-marrying husbands of married females. Khasi sisters do not form a residential group after their marriage; sisters' houses are scattered over the whole village residential area, mixing with households of other descent groups (see Fig. 10 with List 8).

Then, what is the factor that makes the Khasi have two different types of residence i.e. uxorilocal and neolocal[2] within a matrilineal

1. Only the case of some traditional Jaintias (category c) would appear to show groupings similar to those of the Nayar, however, I did not work among them, nor are there anthropological reports available for them, particularly in this respect.

2. I use 'neolocal' in terms of house-building, since they usually build a house for newly married couple in the same village where both wife's and husband's parents live—village endogamy.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

society? Among the matrilineal Central Bantus, Richards says that the determining factor in residence at marriage is the marriage payment or the type of goods and services which the bridegroom gives (Richards, 1950, p. 249). However, the Khasi have no such custom in the marriage contract, it is therefore out of the question to explain the two types of residence in this way. In the case of the Khasi, the determining factor is the type of marriage with relation to the rule of inheritance and ownership of property, which is clearly related to the structure of the *iing*. Khasi marriages can be divided into two categories i.e., marriage with an heiress and with a non-heiress. Marriages with an heiress must be uxorilocal. This accounts for category 1 or 3 of the household pattern. On the other hand, marriages with a non-heiress become neolocal and correspond to category 4 of the household unit.

IV. Marriage with the Heiress

A man married to an heiress, usually lives with his wife's parents and her unmarried or divorced brothers and sisters. For a man, life after marriage under such circumstances require great adjustment and endurance. The husband's status is especially weak when a male member of the wife's kin lives in the same household. The management of property and all economic activities are entirely controlled by the authority (wife's brother or maternal uncle) of the *iing*. The husband works in the wife's field under constant supervision from this authority. Both economic activities and domestic affairs are always under the management of this authority. The children have more attachment to, and are more obedient to, the maternal uncle than to the father. The tie between the uncle and the nephew is so strong that the father is rather like an additional member of the household. He is the last person to be introduced to visitors.

This family system is clearly reflected in the daily behaviour. When we visited the Khasi household of a youngest daughter, if a man (obviously the husband) came first to greet us, he always said "please wait, my wife (or mother-in-law) is coming." And it was the wife who entertained us, offering tea or pan and discussing matters with us, while her husband remained silent in the corner of the room, or in the next room. If her uncle or brother was there, *he* would be the person who talked to us, while his niece or sister served us. In such a case, we were seldom introduced to the husband. When I was working at Shella, I happened to stay in such a family. I had hardly any opportunity to talk to the husband during the two weeks of my stay. He left the house very early in the morning and came back late in the evening from the fields. While he was at home, he was

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

ship. They still live in the same familiar atmosphere as before their marriage. The implications of this ambiguity in the married state are considerable. Particularly the husband's uncomfortable situation, when the wife is heiress, encourages him to take marriage less seriously.

A husband who undergoes hardship in his wife's house, finds himself as the authority in his sister's house; if he is not the authority, he can find at least a respected position as uncle or brother. In the case of a man of authority in the *iing*, the tendency for him to regard his *iing* as more important than his married life is proportionately stronger, as I will discuss later. Hence the most unstable and unsuccessful marriages are those between the heiress and the man of authority. This is one of the reasons we often find among the Khasi: a brother or an uncle, who is already married, acting nevertheless as the head to a family *(iing)* and as a member of its domestic group. This means that he is in a state of temporary separation or divorced. Among the Ashanti, a man and his wife's brother are never found as members of a common household (Fortes, 1950, p. 262), but among the Khasi, on the contrary, a man and his wife's brother are often found as members of a common household. In such cases, however, the brother has no wife, or never brings his wife to his *iing*. Therefore, a man and his wife and his sister never reside together. As far as the residence of women is concerned, the Khasi keep to the strict descent rule; two women who belong to different descent groups never live together. This point differentiates the Khasi residence pattern, in which social structure is involved, from that not only of the Ashanti but also of the Yao where the head of a descent group can bring his wife to his sister's household, though, among other members, uxorilocal marriage is the rule. These differential aspects of matrilineal systems will be discussed from a more theoretical point of view later.

In addition, should a Khasi man even succeed in spending his life with his wife's kinsmen, as soon as the wife dies, he will usually return to his *iing*, that is, to his sister's house, where he is received warmly and where he often acts as the *de facto* authorithy, as in the similar situation of divorce and separation. Thus the strong matrilineal structural principle tends to orient a man towards his own descent group, the *iing*.

The man's attachment to his *iing* is very great throughout his life. In this regard the Khasi differs from the matrilineal Negri Sembilan Malay. Among the latter, returning to the matrilineal kin is regarded by the man as an imposition rather than as the enjoyment of a legitimate privilege (see Swift, 1958, p. 157).[1] This difference

1. He presents this fact as one of the reasons of the durability of marriage among the Negri Sembilan. Indeed, on this precise point they differ from the Khasi where marriage is rather unstable.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

178 no polygynists, though there were many personal temporary illicit
184 relations or love affairs.

It is true that even in interior villages polygyny is rapidly decreas-
595 ing. In the two villages I found only two cases of polygyny: a man with two wives in Sohkynduh (Josio in List 6, whose wives are 26 and 32, and a man with three wives in Kongton (Jubongrai in List 9, whose wives are 8, 20 and 52). These cases appeared clearly as cases of polygyny which the villagers recognized as such, speaking of them quite differently from the way they would have spoken of lovers, calling them wives and husbands. Of course, the first wife socially outranks the secondary wives, as *ka tynga trai*, and the term *ka tynga tuh* is used for the latter, as Gurdon states (1914, p. 80). The difference being that the first wife has a legal marriage ceremony while the
585 others have not—*ka tynga tuh* means literally 'stolen wife.' About
595 the marriage ceremony, Gurdon gives a detailed discription (*ibid.*, pp. 127-130) and says there are three forms of marriage ceremonies, *Pynkiewnyiat*, *Lamdoh* and *Iadih-kiad*. The first and second forms are considered the more respectable; the last one is resorted to by the very poor who cannot afford the greater expense entailed by the first two. Unfortunately, during my stay in these villages, no marriage ceremony took place, but villagers described to me what seems to be the *Iadih-kiad*, where only a fowl is sacrified, and the whole procedure is much simpler than that described by Gurdon. However, whatever the complexity and richness may be, there is a distinct line between having a ceremony and not having it, and this draws the distinction between the status of the first wife and that of the secondary wives.

428 Nevertheless, this distinction has more of a social bearing than the
595 legal bearing it has in a patrilineal system. Since they follow the
851 matrilineal system, the legal distinction between the first wife and the secondary wife does not affect their children's status and their propety rights, at least not in the villages where I worked. The children's social locus is determined by their mother. The children (particularly the youngest daughter) have the right to inherit their fathers acquired property which is automatically under their mother's ownership. If the polygynist father has acquired property by working their mother's field, or in trading on behalf of their mother, whether she be the first wife or the second, this property undoubtedly belongs to the children of that wife, not to the first wife alone. The father's physial locus at the time of his economic realisations is the decisive factor.

591 The Khasi polygynist, without bringing his wives into one house-
595 hold, alternates his residence among them, in turn or according to his temper. This practice is similar to that of the Trukese described by Goodenough (1951, p. 123), and quite different from that of the Garo

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

which I described previously, where a man brings his secondary wives to his first wife's house in which he is acting as the head. Furthermore, sororal polygyny is prohibited, while it was prefered among the Garo in terms of wives taken from the same *mahari*, though mostly not real sisters. The strong jealousy, which I observed, among the Khasi wives of a polygynist, would appear to make such polygynous marriages with closely related women practically impossible. As shown in List 6 & 9 every single one of the wives of each polygynist belongs to different *kur*, and the two secondary wives of the man of Kongton came from neighbouring villages.

These aspects of Khasi polygyny are related fundamentally to the underlying Khasi social structure. It should be remembered that every married woman has her independent household, *iing*, and that two women of different descent groups never reside together (see p. 127). The picture is one of every married woman holding a key-point in the whole network of the social system, and men fit into this network with much flexibility. The strong stability of women and the fluid nature of men in terms of residence naturally produces this form of polygyny. This analogy is also true of lovers' relations and illegal marriages. Though polygyny is a rapidly decreasing institution all over the Khasi Hills, cases of lovers' relations and illegal marriages are found to be very numerous among the Khasi, as compared with neighbouring tribes and peoples in Assam.

Throughout my discussions of various forms of Khasi marriage, I found men to be more or less in the position wittily described by one of them as "having one leg in my sister's house, the other in my wife's," except in cases of the husband/father who succeds in establishing paternal authority, as in marriages with a non-heiress. Even in the latter a man might have a period of uncertainty until his children were born and until the economic basis for his matrimonial life was firmly established. For the rest, Khasi men would be in the position of either becoming the authority of an *iing*, or swinging between their sister and their wife, which may produce more opportunities for lovers' relations. One of a man's legs is certainly always found in his sister's house, the other may rest in his wife's, but it may also rest in another woman's house. The wife being rather accustomed to his occasional absence due to his visits to his sister's house, another kind of absence does not mark any great change from the usual situation, at least not physically. Such situations occur particularly in the earlier stage of the marriage, as a sort of continuation of premarital affairs, which are quite freely practised: it is a usual custom before marriage for young men to sleep at a girl's house whom they like though they say sexual intercourse usually does not take place in such cases. This I observed in Sohkynduh and Kongton.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7
Garo AR5

of complications and variations in matrilineal systems. The matrilineal system is not a mirror of the patrilineal system; it is a different system in which more complicated mechanisms are involved. This complexity of the matrilineal system is a decided handicap when it comes to resisting radical economic changes. In order to preserve the system, a fairly stable economy is required, well-balanced in its population and resources. This may be one of the reasons for the rapid disintegration or unstability of social organization of matrilineal peoples in the world.

The difficulty of preserving in function both lines *A* and *B* is caused by residential problems—individual marriages which contradict the sibling cohesion. According to my theoretical analysis, there are four alternative ways of resolving such contradictory factors, each case being represented by actual ethnographic samples.[1] Each arrangement represents a different degree of the function of the two lines *A* and *B* in relation to the residential pattern, as following (see Fig. 13):

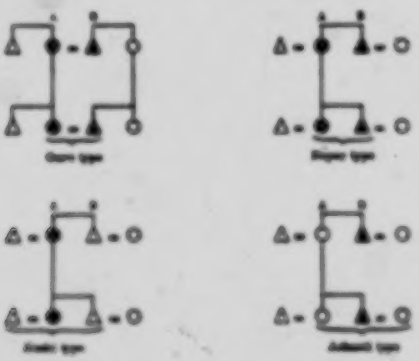

FIG. 13. — *Central Core of Matrilineages in Relation to Property Groups and Residential Groups.*

The Garo type. The co-residential type is 'husband-wife' instead of 'brother-sister.' The function of both lines *A* and *B* is equally strong. This is kept by the marriage contract between two local lines, so that it is possible to keep the function of each line against the residential separation of the two lines in one descent group. This type is found at the moment only among the Garo.

1. For this discussion I take only such major matrilineal samples for which ample documentation is available.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7 •
Garo AR5

The Nayar type: The counter scheme of the Garo type: the co-residential type is 'brother-sister' instead of 'husband-wife.' The function of both line *A* and *B* is equally strong. This type is found among the traditional Nayar (except those in North Malabar) and the Minangkabau matrilineal people.

The Khasi type: The ideal co-residential type consists of a woman with either her husband or her brother. The function of line *A* is much stronger than that of line *B*. This type is found among the Khasi, the Hopi, the Zuni, the Trukese, the Negri-Sembilan Malay, the Yao, etc.

The Ashanti type: The ideal co-residential type consists of a man with either his wife or his sister. The function of line *B* is much stronger than that of line *A*. This type is found among the Ashanti, the Gwembe Tonga, the Mayombe, the Trobrianda, the Nayar of North Malabar, etc.

In terms of the strong function of both lines *A* and *B*, both the Garo type and the Nayar type may fall into a similar category. But as already explained, their structure basically differs from one another, and clearly appears as the counter schemes of different residential arrangements. The Nayar type shares with the Khasi a rather similar structure in terms of a descent group equated with a property group, while in the Garo type the two lines *A* and *B* of a single descent group never form an independent property unit.

If, leaving aside the Garo type, we consider the three others, the Nayar type appears again different from the rest in so far as in it, both lines fulfill an equally strong function, while in the Khasi and Ashanti types, one of the two lines is always more developed functionnally than the other. The Nayar type presents the highest degree of descent group solidarity among the three. This Nayar situation might be compared with that of the traditional Chinese patrilineal systems.[1] In both social systems the structural importance of marriage is minimized: the role of a spouse is only to ensure descendants of the matrilineal (patrilineal) group. The structural importance of a husband (wife) is almost neglected, while the wife (husband) holds the paramount locus in her (his) descent line. The descent group manifests the strongest solidarity within itself, neglecting affinal relation with other groups. This principle results in the custom of the "visiting husband" in the matrilineal system; and, in the patrilineal system, in a total social shift of the wife by her complete assimilation into her husband's group, and separation from her descent group,—she has no social and personal independent locus in terms of the structure. It is an interesting fact that the most extreme scheme of highly institutionalized unilineal systems can be seen among societies of pre-industrialized high civilization. These schemes are structurally opposed to those of the system of the moiety

1. Fortes touches this point in his paper (Fortes, 1950, p. 208).

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

[Jatinga]

three miles away from Jatinga. As one may expect in such a situation, quite a number of intermarriages with these peoples appear in my census of Jatinga. The resultant of these intermarriages was that when the couple and their children lived in Jatinga, they were considered to have become Khasi; otherwise they were held to be non-Khasi, whether the spouse was man or woman. This orientation of social recognition of the result of intermarriage was generally seen among Khasi in such situations, not only in the case of Jatinga.

The following are extracts of intermarriages from my genealogical table of Jatinga people.

A. Cases of intermarriages in which the descendants became Khasi.

1. A woman of the Dome clan married a Kuki man. All members of the present Dome clan at Jatinga are their descendants.
2. A woman of the Rymbai clan married a Kuki man as her second marriage. Their descendants are Rymbai.
3. A man of the Suchiang clan married a Mikir woman, and lived in Jatinga. They had one daughter who married a man of the Hua clan of Jatinga. They named this woman's line 'Shadap' as one of the Khasi clans. Later this Mikir woman's sister's daughter married a man of Rupsi-Lati, and their descendants were also named 'Shadap' by the villagers. Thus Shadap clan was created by a Mikir woman who married a Khasi man of Jatinga.
4. A Khasi man married a Lushai woman and lived at Aijal, the headquarters of the Lushai Hills. They said he became Lushai. Later a man of the Pajat clan of Jatinga married his daughter from Aijal. This couple lives at Jatinga and has several children. The villagers said they have to give them a new clan name. It is under consideration.

B. Cases of intermarriages leading to the emigration of Jatinga inhabitants.

5. A man of Jatinga married a woman of Zemi-Naga as his second marriage and lives at his wife's village.
6. A woman (the daughter of the woman of Rymbai, who married a Kuki: A-2) married a Moslem man and lives at Haflong.
7. A woman of Rymbai married a Panjabee and lives at Shillong. This woman is (B-6)'s mother's sister's daughter.
8. A woman of Siangshai clan married an Assamese and lives at Gauhati.
9. A woman of Rupsi-Tah married an Anglo-Indian and has gone to the United Provinces.
10. A woman of Jatinga married a man of Zemi-Naga and went to his village.
11. A woman of Jatinga married a man of Cacharee and lived at his village some time, but she came back to Jatinga after divorcing him.

A cases belong to the earlier period when Jatinga had a shortage of population, while *B* cases, except 10 and 11, are found among the present younger generation. The population, which had increased rapidly in the last twenty years with economic prosperity, is suffering from the recent economic depression caused by the Partition as well as from the great damages done to their orange gardens and pan-leaf gardens by tree diseases. Moreover they have an unbalanced rate of birth according to sex: females are more numerous than males. Therefore, many daughters marry out as shown in the cases of *B*. The above-cited cases are only concerned with intermarriages with non-Khasi, but there are still other women who married Khasi men and who reside outside Jatinga, as for example, at Haflong and Shillong.

In the village there are still many unmarried girls without suitable spouses. In the olden days, it was less difficult to marry neighbouring tribal peoples.

group of matrilineal and Mon-Khmer-speaking people who claim as their ancestral homeland the present-day United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District (within approximately 90° 47' and 92° 52' E. and 25° 5' and 26° 5' N.). This group includes the Jaintias (also Pnar or Synteng) in the southeast, who differ from the Khasis primarily in their duolocal residence pattern and less virulent forms of sorcery. (The Hadem in eastern Jaintia are Kuki people.) It also includes the Lyngngams (also spelled Lyngam) in the west, who practice migratory swidden agriculture and certain peculiar funerary rites, and are said by Ehrenfels (1955) to be culturally intermediate between Khasis and Garos. Finally, it includes Bhois, Wars, and upland Khasis, which terms are primarily territorial. Bhoi country is the north-central part of the District, and is culturally complicated by the presence of Mikirs, Lalungs, and Nepalis. War country spans the entire southern length of the District, so that Wars divide into Jaintia Wars and Khasi Wars, of these, the Khasi War have traditionally transmitted property to sons as well as to daughters. The upland center of the District is the country of the Khasis proper, those whose culture provides the most useful model for interpreting the variations found elsewhere. [For general reference on all categories of Khasi culture, cf. Costa 1906 and 1937, also Gurdon 1907, especially for data on regional variations.] Geography. The District is 5,554 square miles of hilly tableland, intricately dissected by numerous rivers, and marked by significant ecological variation over very short distances. The tableland steps gently downward north from Shillong Peak, which at 6,445 feet is the highest point in the District, and over about 35 miles runs into the Brahmaputra valley where this is some 250 feet above sea level. To the south, the land slopes more steeply downward for about 20 miles, and then drops abruptly, in cliff and steep-slope formations, to the Ganges coastal delta that begins at its north with Sylhet. The annual southwest monsoons drop torrential rains around Cherrapunji and Mawsynram villages (for Cherrapunji, a record 805 inches in 1961), but less, reaching Shillong 33 miles to the northeast, provide only about 100 inches per year. Rainfall is again greater in Bhoi, which shares the Brahmaputra valley climate. Climate is temperate on the high Shillong plateau, where it seldom freezes and never snows. To the north, climate becomes subtropical, forest is jungly, and fevers abound. The climate to the south also subtropical. [Cf. Hooker 1901: chap. XXIX.] Linguistic affiliation. Khasi is one of the major Mon-Khmer languages, related to Mon, Khmer, Semang-Sakai, Nicobarese, and Palaung-Wa. The major Khasi dialects are Khasi, Jaintia, and Lyngngam, to which Grierson adds War. Further minor variations occur from village to village. The Khasis had no written until 1842, when the roman alphabet was secretly applied to the Cherrapunji dialect of Khasi proper. [Cf. Sahni 1961, Grierson 1903-28: 2: 88ff, Synteng 1962.]

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says that the MoBrCh but not the FaSiCh is prohibited (1897: 2), but Gordon says that the MoBrCh is eligible after the death of MoBr, and that FaSiCh is eligible after the death of Fa (1937: 78). Nowadays both types of marriage occur, whether the linking relative is living or dead. **Residence.** Residence is either duolocal or matrilocal under the roof of the wife's mother until the birth of one or two children. For a man married to a youngest daughter, it then continues to be matrilocal. For men married to other daughters, it becomes uxorilocal, there have also always been cases of virilocal residence, and it is now common to find neolocal residence in Shillong. For neo-Christian Jaintias, it is duolocal throughout the marriage. **Domestic unit.** The domestic unit is the elementary family, though for a youngest daughter it may temporarily include also her aged mother, aged father, unmarried siblings, or divorced or widowed brothers. **Inheritance.** Traditionally, after the Khasi mother had helped each of her daughters to build and supply a house when each one married and had children, her only real obligation to help them economically was ended. Everything she possessed, excepting certain personalty that was destroyed in her cremation, was inherited by her youngest daughter. Failing daughters, a woman's property reverted to her next youngest sister's daughter. Today, this pattern is often modified by putting more property into the hands of older daughters and even sons. [Cf. Cantlie 1934, Becker 1954.] **Divorce.** A woman may effect numerous and usually brief separations from her husband by simply closing the door of her house to him, whereupon he returns to the house of his mother or youngest sister. Divorce, however, must be initiated by mutual consent. Divorce is very common, even though women resist it because they do not wish to lose a provider, and men because they do not wish to lose their children. Formerly it was accomplished by a simple ritual in the presence of witnesses, followed by public announcement by a town crier. Now, the witnesses and the public announcement have been dispensed with, and evidence for divorce consists only in the word of the parties concerned.

SOCIOPOLITICAL ORGANIZATION. **Political organization.** The basic unit of political organization is the village, which is composed of one or more dominant local descent groups plus several others. Village government is by an assembly of all resident adult males, under the informal chairmanship of a headman elected by them from among their number. The membership of any immigrant household into a village is defined by the participation of the household's males in this assembly. Statistical membership in a village is voluntary. Khasi chiefdoms probably arose out of voluntary associations of villages, which occasionally transferred allegiance from one chief to another.

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

strip of fine silk for the loins, a part of which hangs gracefully as low as the calves in front. No notice is here taken of what has undoubtedly been added and borrowed from their more civilized neighbours in the plains. 291

*Marriage.—The marriageable age for females is from 15 to 18; for males, from 18 to 24. Matrimonial alliances are contracted either through the parents or the living representatives of the families to which the parties belong. The mode of procedure is still very primitive and uncerementious. The bridegroom, escorted by a number of friends and relatives, goes to the house of the bride, where all are feasted and lodged for the night; on the morrow he leads the bride, accompanied by a number of her relatives, to his own house, and entertains the company with dishes of boiled rice and fresh pork. After remaining there a day or two, the newly-married couple return together to the house of the wife, which becomes their future home. Marriage is dissoluble by regular divorce, for any sufficient cause, and often without any assignable reason except mutual dislike or want of issue, the latter being the most common case of all. Marriage with the Khásiás is simply a conventional arrangement, with nothing further for its object than the procreation of children; failing that, it is no longer looked upon as a contract permanently binding. Divorce is effected in the presence of eye-witnesses—the parents, or the heads of clans. Five cowries (*kauris*) are produced by the parties and exchanged, then cast away by mutual consent, and the ceremony is over. Parties once divorced can never again contract marriage with each other, but they are at liberty to marry into other families. Polygamy, strictly so called, is not sanctioned by Khási custom. Adultery is looked upon as a serious crime. If the five cowries have not been cast away by mutual consent, both husband and wife are held to be subject to the "matrimonial demon;" and even when either dies in wedlock, the survivor is not at liberty to contract a fresh alliance until he or she pays the family a sum of money as the means of removing the surviving party from subjection to the "matrimonial demon." The husband is a stranger, so to speak, in the family he has entered, and perpetuates the race of others, not his own. The children in all questions of lineage and personal rights follow the mother. There are always two interests in the same family—that of the husband, and that of the wife. Whatever the husband may have earned or acquired in 58 591 586 [581] 587 595 837 587 593 611 593 428